

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 remain pending in the application, with claims 1, 6, 9, 12, 15 and 18 being the independent claims.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 1-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Publication No. 2002/0143529 (hereinafter referred to as "Schmid"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reason.

Independent claims 1, 6, 9, 12 and 15 generally include a grammar having a wildcard identifier in place of a predefined category of words, rules to produce artificial combinations of unique sounds in a language where each artificial combination represents a pronunciation of words in the predefined category and a set of artificial combinations of unique sounds created by substituting the wildcard identifier with the rules. In summary, the wildcard identifier of the present claimed invention is substituted with rules to create a set of artificial combinations of unique sounds for a predefined category of words in the grammar.

Schmid does not teach or suggest using a wildcard identifier as claimed. In support of the rejection as applied to the claimed wildcard identifier, the Examiner cited to the wildcard transition/tag of Schmid (Figure 3, element 326; Column 8, paragraphs 0112 and 0113). In those cited passages of Schmid, it appears that the wildcard transition/tag indicates to the speech recognition engine that it should ignore words occurring between phrases preceding the wildcard transition/tag and phrases coming after the wildcard transition/tag. Schmid goes

on to explain that the wildcard transition/tag can be used to indicate a transition in which it does not matter what the user says during the transition as long as they speak the remaining phrases in the rule. This is very different from the claimed wildcard identifier of the present invention. As explained above, when the claimed wildcard identifier is encountered it is substituted with rules to create a set of artificial combinations of unique sounds for a predefined category of words in the grammar. For at least this reason, independent claims 1, 6, 9, 12 and 15 and their respective dependent claims 2-5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 17 are distinguishable from Schmid. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection to these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Independent claim 18 and its dependent claims 19-21 are also patentable over Schmid for a similar reason as discussed above. Claim 18 includes a speech engine to accept human speech having a wildcard word as input and to determine a number of potential words matching the wildcard word.

Schmid does not teach or suggest using a wildcard word as claimed. In support of the rejection as applied to the claimed wildcard word, the Examiner cited to the wildcard transition/tag of Schmid (Column 8, paragraph 0112). As explained above, the wildcard transition/tag of Schmid indicates to the speech recognition engine that it should ignore words occurring between phrases preceding the wildcard transition/tag and phrases coming after the wildcard transition/tag. This is very different from the claimed wildcard word of the present invention. As explained above, when the claimed wildcard word is encountered by the speech engine it determines a number of potential words matching the wildcard word. For at least this reason, independent claim 18 and its dependent claims 19-21 are distinguishable from

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Schmid. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection to these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

INVITATION FOR A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned, Molly A. McCall, at (703) 633-3311 if there remains any issue with allowance of the case.

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CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed accommodated or rendered moot. Thus, Applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance, and as such, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections, and allowance of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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